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Volunteer Engagement

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Abstract

When Covid-19 hit and caused a pandemic, volunteering and not for profits in Monterey County were severely impacted. Using new application forms, surveys, and a presentation, a program was created to engage volunteers when volunteering became almost nonexistent. The presentation was the centerpiece of the engagement program. The presentation will inform volunteers how to stay engaged and learn new skills and find gainful employment through volunteering.

Keywords: volunteer, volunteering, engagement, community based, virtual volunteering

Agency & Communities Served

Community Builders of Monterey County (CBMC) connects people seeking volunteer opportunities with community-based not-for-profits who need volunteers. The mission statement for CBMC is "to strengthen the quality of life for the diverse population of Monterey County by connecting volunteers to impact local needs." (2020). Evaluating the community served is very broad as the website for CBMC hosts 75 different community not-for-profits in need of volunteers.

CBMC uses a website that connects prospective volunteers with not-for-profit's ranging from the Arts Council of Monterey County to Dorothy's Kitchen. What makes this program good is that CBMC covers all the vulnerable groups of society; volunteerism has been a significant key in building healthy, diverse communities. What is nice about this is that the website also gives people looking for volunteer opportunities a wide swath of possibilities to volunteer. CBMC is in the process of becoming more involved in the recruitment process and engagement of volunteers.

Problem Description

Under the current definition of a volunteer by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, a person who gets paid to work in retail is an employee. In contrast, the same job in the not-for-profit thrift store who is not paid is a volunteer ("Making volunteer work visible: supplementary measures of work in labor force statistics", 2020). Almost everyone at one time or another has volunteered in some way. A child might volunteer to wash dishes or take out the trash to gain favor as a child. High school students might volunteer because this was part of a graduation requirement. College students in fraternities or sororities might have to do a certain amount of community service hours to maintain their Greek society status. Many young men and women

might also volunteer to serve their country in the military or the world through the Peace Corps. Adults from their 20's to retirees may choose to volunteer for many reasons like helping a specific cause or being connected to society. Whatever the reason a person volunteers, the services they provide are invaluable.

Volunteerism has been a part of America going back to when Benjamin Franklin founded the Union Fire Company in 1736 (Baker, 2020). The Spring of 2020 Covid-19 pandemic showed the radical need for volunteers, but this also created a need for both volunteers and the agencies to adapt to the community's needs. Only 55% of not-for-profits assess the use of volunteers ("25 Volunteer Statistics That Will Blow Your Mind | VolunteerHub", 2020), which could also have been impacted by Covid-19. Many places that served the most vulnerable people had looked at new ways to help but did not plan to support them on a remote basis. In a recent survey performed by CBMC, 87.5% of local not-for-profits were impacted by how they deliver services. See figure 3 in appendix C (Townend & Sammon, 2020). While Covid-19 has negatively impacted how services are provided, the pandemic did also have one positive aspect. It helped expose the need to modernize how services are delivered and how volunteers can be a part of the new normal.

Contributing Factors

Due to pandemic and natural disasters keeping volunteers engaged when there is a lack of volunteer opportunities has become arid in these uncertain times.

With a lack of ability to engage volunteers in-person, volunteers feel less inclined to connect with existing volunteer opportunities.

During this current uncertain climate, not-for-profits are slow to adjust to alternative ways to engage volunteers.

Consequences

Losing quality volunteers for lack of engagement.

When organizations do not adapt to changing times, community buy-in drops, affecting fundraising.

Not-for-profits are closing their doors when volunteers could extend the life of the not-for-profit.

Problem Model

Contributing Factors	Problem	Consequences
Due to pandemic and natural disasters keeping volunteers engaged when there is a lack of volunteer opportunities has become arid in these uncertain times.	The ability to engage and retain volunteers in Monterey County has been dramatically impacted during the Covid-19 Pandemic.	Organizations are losing quality volunteers for lack of engagement.
With a lack of ability to engage volunteers in-person, volunteers feel less inclined to connect with existing volunteer opportunities.		When organizations do not adapt to changing times, community buy-in drops, affecting fundraising.

During this current uncertain climate, not-for-profits are slow to adjust to alternative ways to engage volunteers.		Not for profits closing their doors by not adapting to current climates to engage and retain clients.
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Capstone Project Description and Justification

Capstone Project

Working with CBMC, a volunteer engagement program was created. This project included surveys sent out to organizations and volunteers, updating volunteer applications, and making an online at will PDF of the volunteer. Also, a 50-minute PowerPoint presentation was created with a script tied to the slides that can be adapted for organizations and future volunteers.

Project Purpose

Community Builders for Monterey County maintains a website that helps organizations find volunteers and volunteers to match their passion. Since Covid-19 impacted many places' abilities to keep volunteers safe, be organizations cut back on volunteers' use. Volunteers who could no longer volunteer at their organization of people who wanted to help by volunteering had a hard time finding a place to help. The CBMC website has 82 organizations and 189 volunteers. Since many organizations do not engage the volunteers, CBMC created an engagement program that helped volunteers feel connected to the community. The presentation will teach volunteers how they fit into an organization, finding their passion, interviewing the organizations while being interviewed, and learning how to convert their volunteer experience into job skills and

future job placement. This engagement program also has a side component that will be implemented in the future by CMBC, helping organizations learn to use remote volunteers who have gone through the Volunteer Engagement presentation.

Project Justification

The justification for this project is the need to engage volunteers or prospective volunteers when there is a shortage of organizations using in-person volunteers. Since people use volunteering for many reasons, such as "making a difference," which was the number one choice of recent respondents to a volunteer survey conducted by CBMC, they still need to feel they are engaged and part of the community.

Project Implementation

CBMC is a relatively new not-for-profit, which has caused them to evaluate their internal framework. The first stage of project implementation is to create a new volunteer application, which will be incorporated into the new framework of CBMC. The unique design of their volunteer application and online editable PDF of the application was also created to meet the need for social distance and remote volunteering. Once the application was completed and approved, the next step was creating a survey that went out to a sampling of organizations that use CBMC's website. This survey was designed to collect information on how organizations were engaging volunteers during Covid-19. Of the ten organizations invited to fill out the online poll, eight responded, 87.5% said that Covid had impacted their use of volunteers. By 87.5%, the same organizations said they are interested in training on how to use remote volunteers. With that information, CBMC decided to create a volunteer engagement program.

The volunteer engagement program was the next step in the project. The first part of this implementation was to send out a 10 question survey to 182 registered volunteers on the CMBC

website. Of the 182 emails sent to volunteers, 20 email addresses came back invalid, leaving a total of 162 possible respondents. Of those 162 potential respondents, 39 took the survey giving a calculation of 24% response rate. After the survey results were evaluated, CBMC found the need for a volunteer engagement program. The charts for the demographics are Figure 3 through 13 in Appendix C. The volunteer engagement program consists of a 14 slide presentation with a script that can be edited to fit the presentation's narrative. These slides can be seen in appendix D, Figures 14 through 27. Appendix D also has the script for the presentation. A detailed plan of implementation with the timeline of all deliverables can be seen in Appendix A.

Assessment Plan

CMBC will do a program evaluation to ensure that they have trained presenters, buy-in from the organization that uses volunteers, and presentation times. Once all parts of the project are in place, they will create an online calendar for volunteers to sign up for the presentation. Both volunteers and organizations will be invited to sign up on the calendar. There will be a pre-presentation survey before the presentation, and after the presentation, there will be a post survey. The results will be compared to see if there any changes between pre-and post-surveys scores.

Expected Outcomes

CMBC wants to maintain at all times an 80% engaged volunteer group. As a volunteer signs up on the CBMC website within three months, CBMC plans to have the volunteer attend the engagement presentation. The engagement presentation will also be used for service learners and interns at CBMC.

Project Results

Since CBMC is in the process of restructuring and Covid limitations, the project was not implemented.

Conclusion & Recommendations

Having not been able to implement the project at this time, the only conclusion that can be made is that volunteers can make a difference in the community. The main recommendation that can be made is for CBMC to find the focus both for organizations and for volunteers and to be an active partner in helping both succeed. A follow-up recommendation would be for CBMC to become its standalone 501c3 and expand its reach to South County of Monterey.

Personal Reflection

The internship over the last three semesters has been very challenging. Having to change from my first placement at United Way of Monterey County to my final post at Community Builders for Monterey County. When a project was finally settled on at Community Builders for Monterey County, which was to reach out to isolated seniors and help them find volunteer facilities, Covid-19 made this project not feasible as seniors are part of the at risk group. The next project that could have been a possibility was reaching out to affinity groups. Again Covid makes this unattainable. Over the summer, CBMC started looking at restructuring and had many meetings. During this time, the Points of Light conference was hosted online, and one of the topics was volunteer engagement. CBMC became very interested in this, along with remote volunteering. Remote volunteering seemed to be the way of volunteering during Covid the focus on volunteer engagement and the skills learned in a presentation. Finding research along this line of direction was more challenging than anticipated. There were many research papers on engaging volunteers of very few on remote volunteering, but both of those together was near

impossible to find. Working on that had of a social work aspect, and a public administration aspect presented a challenge.

Learning to work with someone who could not seem to focus on any one thing was adventurous. Having to come out of my comfort zone to complete the project's decision was a good learning experience and frustrating at the same time. The Collaborative Health and Human Services program is good at preparing future workers in the helping fields and teaches you to combine all aspects needed to affect change. Another challenge was also trying to cover all 13 learning objectives. But through all these challenges, the most fantastic part was the learning and the importance of change. This memory will shape the future.

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https://docs.google.com/forms/d/16hI_MGIPTGTHYhM4091ynnhdSYLcKGjUsOPuyfUmRog/

Volunteering May Help You Find Your Next Job! - YouTube

Appendix A

Scope of Work

Activities	Deliverables	Timeline/Deadlines	Supporting Staff
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Update current volunteer application.2. Create online editable volunteer application.3. Create organization remote opportunities survey.4. Creates volunteer engagement survey5. Create volunteer engagement presentation which includes PowerPoint presentation and script for presentation.		All items completed and reviewed by 12/08/2020	Tish Sammon

Appendix B

Figure 1



VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

All information in this document is confidential.

Please print.

First _____ Middle Initial _____ Last _____

Address _____ Apt. # _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Home Phone (____) I _____ Work Phone (____) _____ Cell Phone (____) _____

Identify my gender as _____ Birthday Month ____/Day ____/Year

Any Physical Limitations _____

Are you Bilingual? What Language _____

Volunteer Experience _____

Interests, Skills, Hobbies _____

Clubs, Organizations you belong to _____

Education (highest level) _____ Name of School _____

Degree/Area of Study _____ Under 18 Yes ☐ No ☐

What is your interest in volunteering at this time _____

Have you volunteered before? Yes ☐ No ☐

Please Describe _____

CBMC_Ver 1

Note: Page 1 of editable .pdf

Figure 2

Your availability:

Time of Day: Day ☐ Evening ☐ Weekend ☐

Preferred Days M ☐ T ☐ W ☐ Th ☐ F ☐ S ☐ Sun ☐

Are you available for on-call or short term opportunities Yes _____ No _____

Are you currently employed Yes ☐ No ☐

Employer _____ Job Title _____

References (Personal or professional; not a relative)

Name _____ Relationship _____ Phone (____) _____

Name _____ Relationship _____ Phone (____) _____

In Case of Emergency Please Contact

Name _____ Relationship _____ Phone (____) _____

Name _____ Relationship _____ Phone (____) _____

Criminal History

Have you ever been convicted of a misdemeanor or felony, or are any misdemeanor or felony charges pending against you? Yes ☐ No ☐ If yes, please explain below. (Note: Answering yes will not automatically prohibit you from volunteering, but will be considered with respect to time, circumstances, seriousness and relationship to volunteer responsibilities. Some volunteer positions may require a background check. If you are selected for one of those assignments, you will be provided with a separate criminal background check authorization form.)

My signature below certifies that all statements made on this application are true, complete and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. I understand these statements are subject to verification.

Signature of Applicant _____

Date _____ / _____ / _____

Action Council of Monterey County and Community Builders for Monterey County acknowledges that equal opportunity for all persons is a fundamental human value. Each volunteer applicant will be considered on the basis of individual ability and merit, without regard to race, color, age, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, sex, or marital status.

CBMC_Ver 1

Note: Page 2 of editable .pdf

Appendix C

Organizations

Figure 3

Has Covid-19 Pandemic impacted your volunteer program?
8 responses

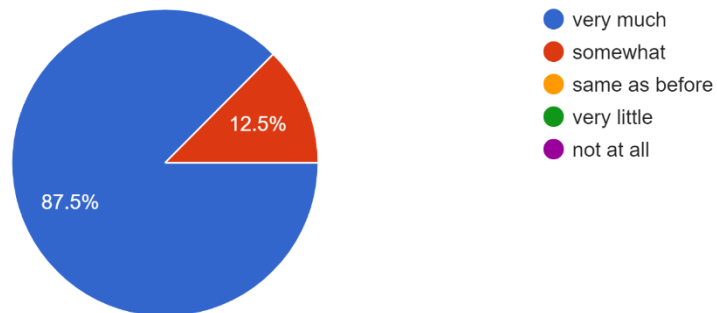


Figure 4

Are you using remote volunteers?
8 responses

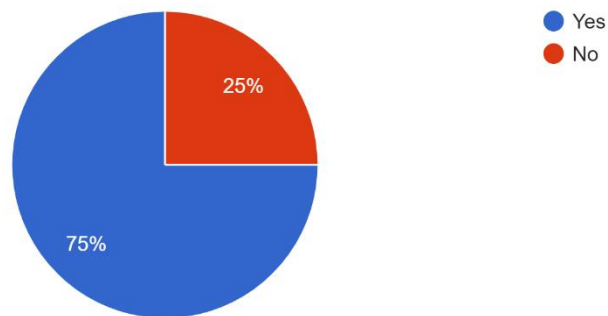
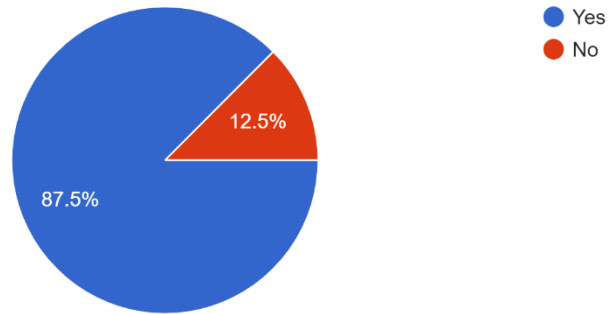


Figure 5

Is your organization interested in exploring remote/virtual volunteer opportunities? (Out of the box thinking is good for all of us!)

8 responses



Volunteers

Figure 6

1. What is your age group?

39 responses

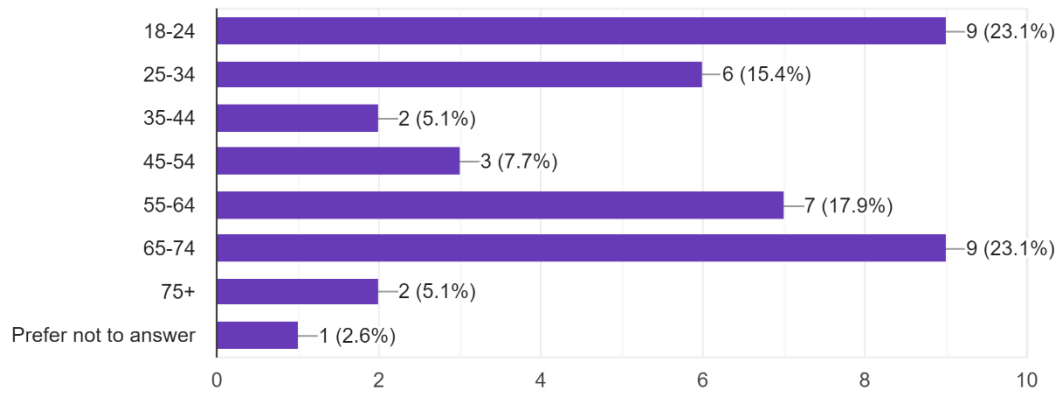


Figure 7

2. Please specify your ethnicity?

39 responses

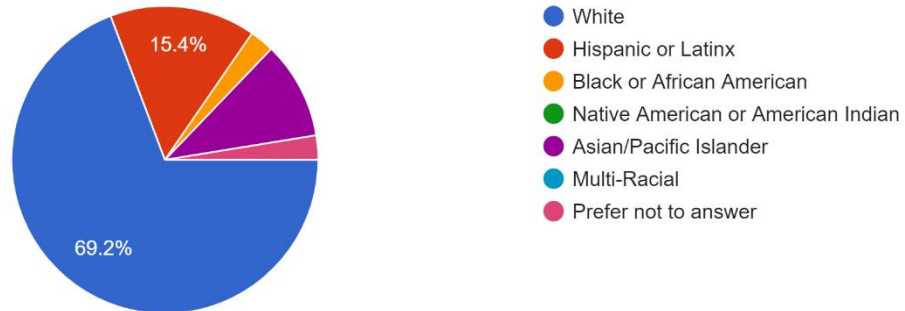


Figure 8

3. What is your highest level of education?

39 responses

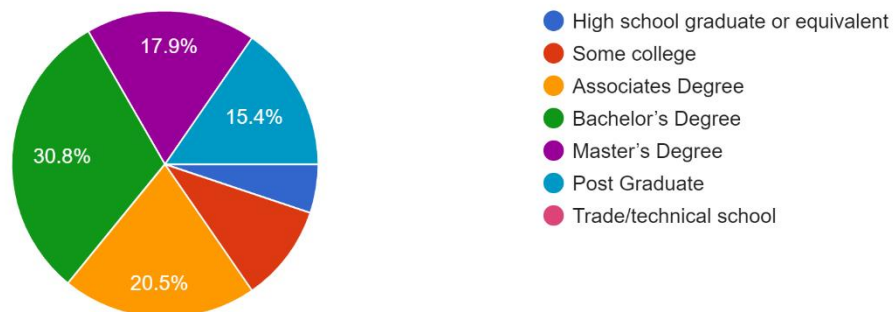


Figure 9

What is your marital status?

39 responses

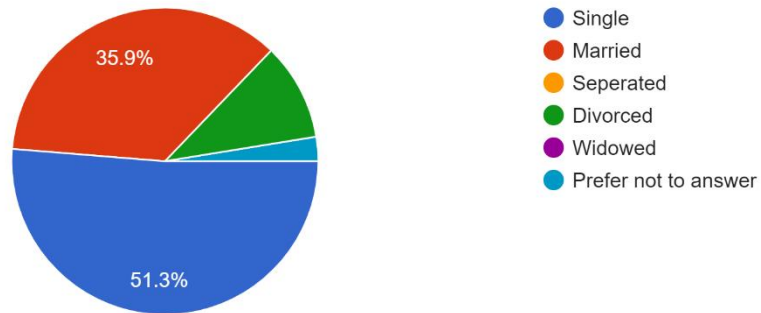


Figure 10

6. Have you ever volunteered before?

39 responses

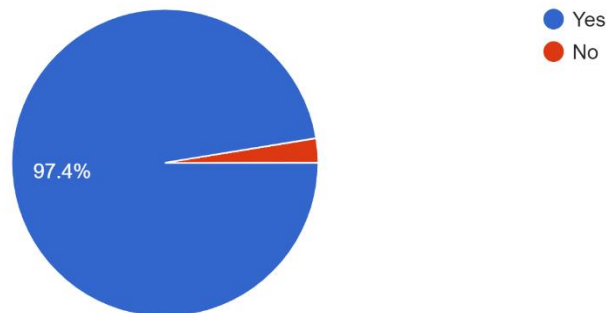


Figure 11

8a. If you were to choose which group you would enjoy working with?

39 responses

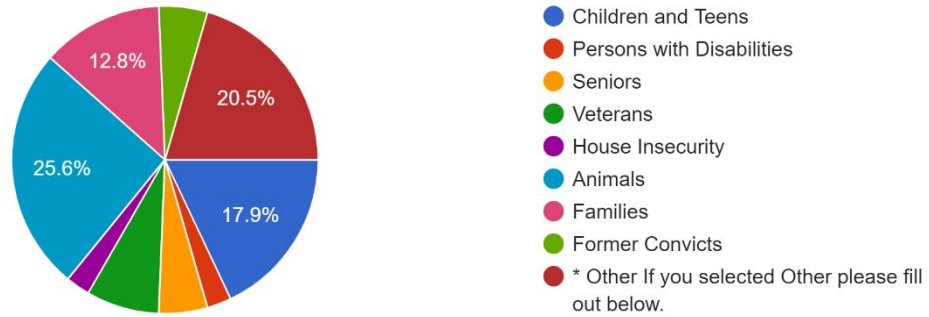


Figure 12

9. What is your motivation for volunteering

39 responses

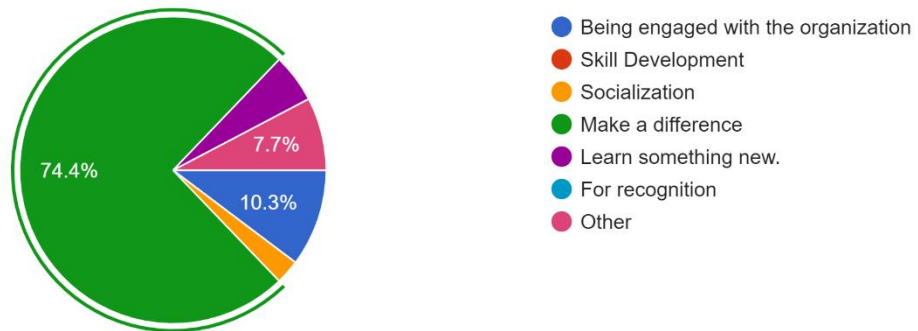
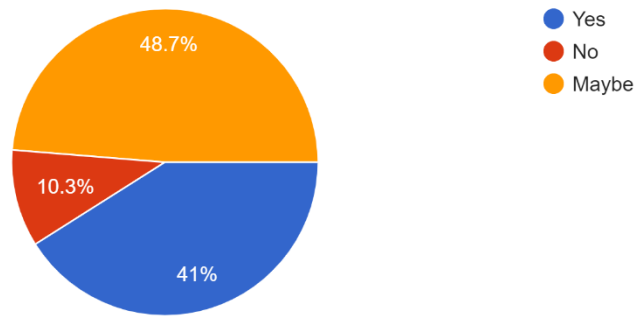


Figure 13

10. If Community Builders for Monterey County were to provide training on volunteer engagement would you be interested?

39 responses



Appendix D

Figure 14



Figure 15

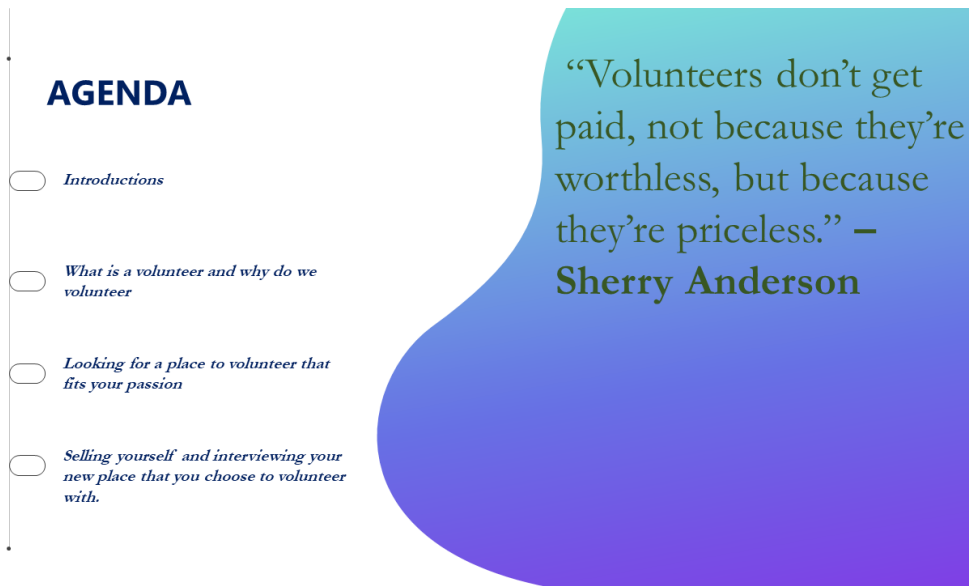


Figure 16



Figure 17



Figure 18



Figure 19

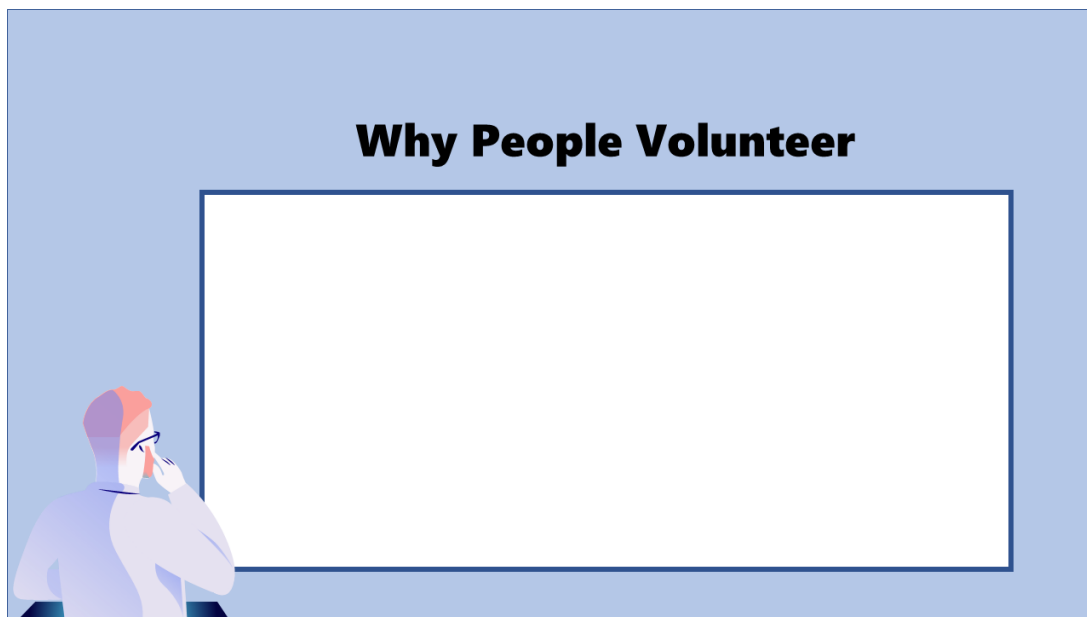


Figure 20

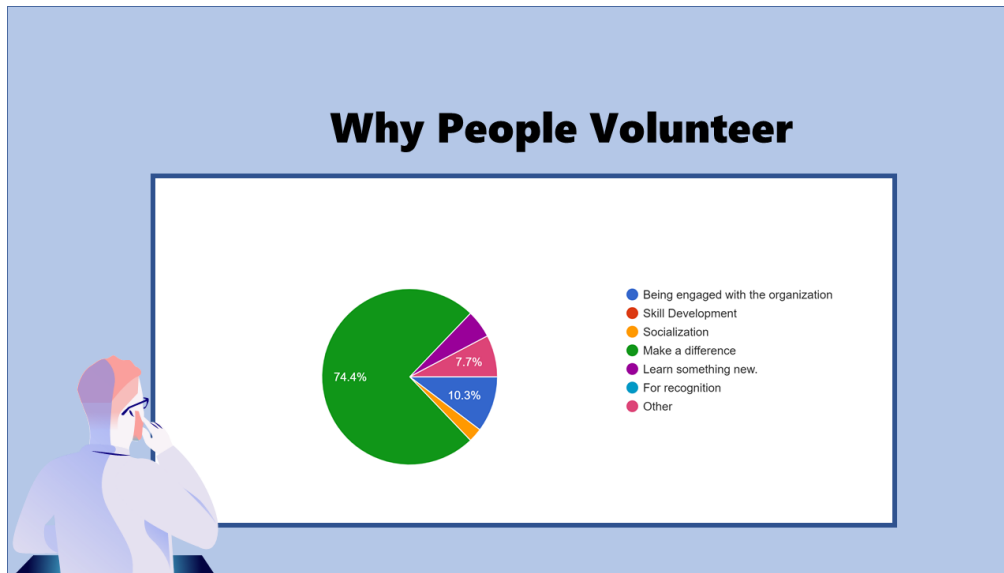


Figure 21

Making a Difference



Other Ways to Help
Fund Raising

Answering the Phone

Entering Information on the
Computer

Handing out Flyers

To Name Just a Few



Figure 22



Figure 23

Volunteers Are a Part of the Puzzle Find Your Fit

- ☐ There are so many places to volunteer in Monterey County.
- ☐ Some places might need a background check.
- ☐ Find your PASSION.
- ☐ Enjoy the good feeling you get from helping.
- ☐ Know the world is a better place when you give your time.
- ☐ Learn new skills.



Figure 24

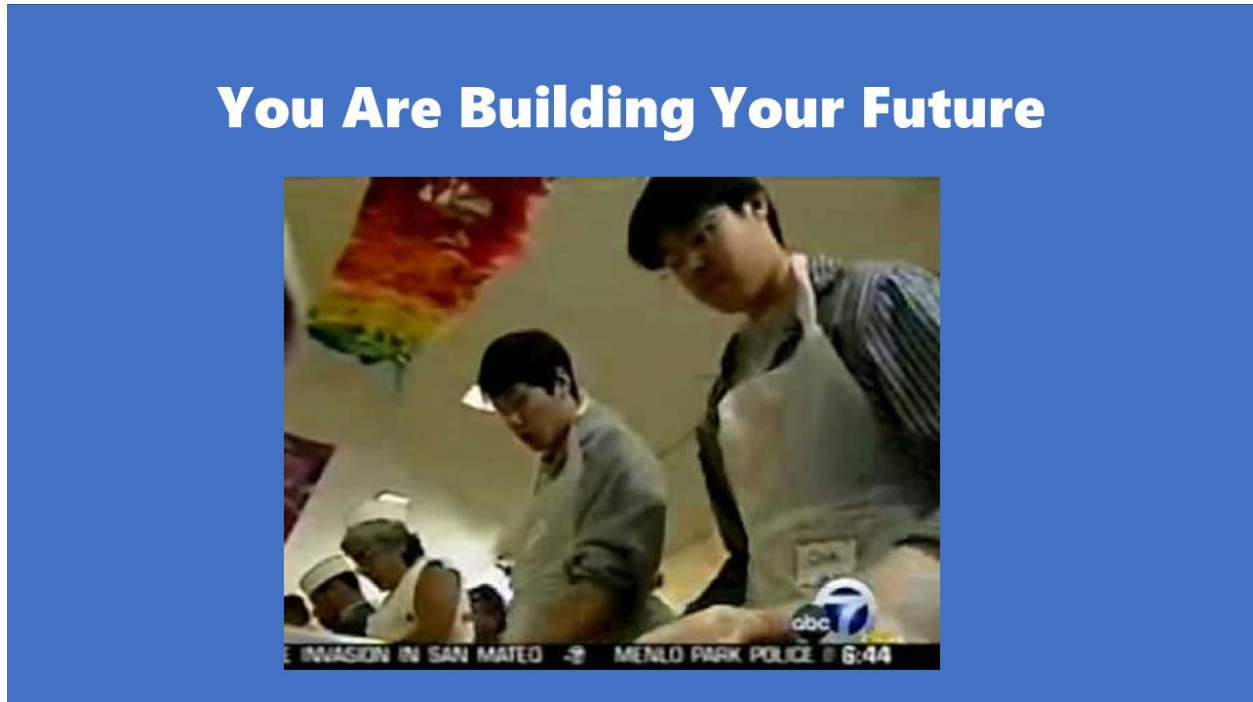


Figure 25

You Are Building Your Future

- ☐ Treat as a job because it could lead to one.
- ☐ Learn new skills when you can.
- ☐ Be kind to everyone you never know who you might be helping.
- ☐ Enjoy the experience.
- ☐ Add the skills you learn to your resume.
- ☐ This could lead to a bright future.



Figure 26

Remember You are Interviewing Them Also

- ☐ Go prepared to ask questions.
- ☐ Look for a place that feels comfortable.
- ☐ Ask if the place has a way to raise concerns.
- ☐ Trust your judgement, if it does not feel right it probably is not.
- ☐ While you are not an employee they rely on you so make sure to you keep your commitment and if you can not, ask how to notify them.
- ☐ Again this could lead to a bright future.

Figure 27

Thank You



Volunteer Presentation Script

Slide #1: Hello my name is (insert your name here) and I represent Community Builders for Monterey County. I want to thank you for coming to this presentation today and hope you find something you can take away and use in your volunteering experiences.

Slide #2: today's agenda is as follows introductions, what is a volunteer and why do we volunteer, looking for a place to volunteer that fits your passion, and Selling yourself and interviewing your new place that you choose to volunteer with. The following quote says it all about the importance of volunteering "Volunteers don't get paid, not because they're worthless, but because they're priceless." By Sherry Anderson.

Slide #3: Please enjoy this video about Being the Change, because that is what all volunteers are is change for a better tomorrow.

Slide #4: now let's take about five minutes to get to know each other. As the person on either your right or left the five questions that are on the slide in their name. Once you get to know each other and having interviewed as each other to everyone else. So take this five minutes to get to know each other.

Slide #5: "Read the definition of a volunteer." Then describe what volunteering means to you. (presenter)

Slide #6: ask everyone all the different reasons they think people may volunteer. After about a minute go to slide seven..

Slide #7: in a recent study conducted by Community Builders for Monterey County the people who responded said by 74% it was to make a difference. We all enjoy knowing that we've helped people that we would volunteer. As you can see there were many more reasons that people said they enjoy volunteering just like you all said.

Slide 8: yes working with people one on one has many positive benefits helping in other ways is just as important. As you can see on the list on the screen are some ways can you think of others? Let's list some more.

Slide 9:As you can see on the screen all the places people like to volunteer, lets list others.

Slide 10: There are so many places to volunteer in Monterey County. Some places might need a background check. Find your PASSION. Enjoy the good feeling you get from helping. Know the world is a better place when you give your time. Learn new skills. You are a part of the puzzle to a change for the better.

Slide11: Enjoy this video about how you should treat your volunteer opportunity as a job because it could end up being one or leading to one.

Slide12: Importance of treating as a job, read slide to group then ask them to list others.

Slide 13: Like in a job when you go to the interview you have questions prepared, do so for your volunteer opportunities also.

Slide 14: Thank you for attending this presentation.